Pam. India

THE

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IN AID OF

SOCIAL PROGRESS IN INDIA

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BY

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SOCIAL PROGRESS IN INDIA.

All writers who attempt to deal with the subject of India are met on the very threshold with a difficulty almost insurmountable. It is the vast multitude and the inconceivable diversity of matter that crowd on the attention. To comprehend India in all its phases is the study of a lifetime; to master one of these phases requires the application of years. The study of political economy or social science in relation to our own country, or some one of the different states of Europe, affords scope for the exercise of the most acute intellect, and how few are there, comparatively, who make any real progress in it? How few are those minds that are capable of grasping, or if they grasp them, of logically arranging and grouping all the principles, all the ideas, all the circumstances which must be duly weighed and allotted each its own place, the action and reaction of one upon another measured and provided for, if we would find a satisfactory solution to the problems presented by the existing condition and probable future of human society!

Yet if the task be so difficult as to be scarcely capable of accomplishment when the range of mental view is confined to a single European State, what must it be when we are dealing with a continent like India?

Here we not only encounter that large class of difficulties that meet us when we have to deal with habits of thought, ideas, associations, and principles totally different from those we are accustomed to in the West, but are confronted at once with a field of such magnitude and such diversity, that we scarcely

know how even to commence its study. It is almost impossible to make Englishmen realise the fact that in treating of India we are in reality treating of a country as large as Europe, excepting Russia, and inhabited by races differing more widely in language, creed, manners, habits of thought, natural disposition and physical development, and varying more in the grade of civilization, than the different nations of the European continent.

I must beg you therefore to bear in mind that whether we have under consideration the political, the financial, or the social condition of India, we are considering such conditions in relation to one-sixth of the human race—in relation to a country inhabited by two hundred millions of people, a portion of the earth including within its limits every variation of climate, from the extremest heat of the tropics to the severest cold of ice-bound regions, peopled by races in every stage of civilization, and with as wide differences as exist between the Highlanders of Scotland and the inhabitants of southern Italy or Greece. Well may the statesman, the philosopher, or the philanthropist stand aghast on the very threshold when he finds himself entering into a field so limitless as this.

The first step, however, while it is always the most difficult, is generally the most important; and the first thing we have to do is to arouse attention. If once public interest in this country could be fairly awakened to the condition of India, and the enormous value that dependency is to Great Britain, we should soon find that great engine of modern progress, the activity of thought, which has never yet declared itself at fault in the face of any problem of political, commercial, or social science, turned to the study of India and its resources. We should then find English statesmen beginning to realise the gross absurdity of applying uniform and stereotyped principles of government to races differing as widely as the Scotch and the Sicilian, the Laplander and the Greek. They would make the discovery that a system of fiscal administration adapted to London or Edinburgh might not be equally suited to Italy and Iceland. Our engineers would realise the fact that while the principles of mechanics are the same all the world over, yet that the conditions under which these principles may have to be applied may vary so much as

to require a long apprenticeship to understand the peculiar character of natural obstacles which have to be overcome in constructing canals or railways, or roads, or bridges, on the Indian continent. The political economist might be brought to admit that his stereotyped axioms are axioms no longer, for when you have to deal with millions of the human race who are not actuated by the same motives as that portion of mankind from the study of whose development the accepted axioms of political economy have been inferred, you find yourself forced either to adopt new economic principles or else you inevitably arrive at wrong conclusions, for you start from wrong premises.

My first object, then, is to arouse attention and awaken public interest in this country in India. This ought not to be so hopeless a task as it is usually represented. The general complaint among the intelligent and educated classes I find, with regard to India, is the want of information,—ignorance which they are only too glad to have removed. One thing, however, is certain, that Englishmen, as a rule, do not fully realise the value of India to this country. I cannot pause now to dwell upon this subject. If I had time I could show you how the drain upon India's revenues amounts to £12,000,000 annually. This sum represents the actual value in hard cash of the estate which Great Britain owns in the Eastern hemisphere. I could show you that from the time of our first occupation of India to the present day the pecuniary profit England has realised from India is represented by a sum no less than sixteen hundred million pounds sterling, without including the vast private fortunes that have been amassed there in former days and brought to England to be spent here. And this altogether apart from India's commercial value as a purchaser of English manufactured goods, and apart from her value as a field of enterprise for the employment of our middle and educated classes. I cannot touch upon the advantages which India offers as a study for the political economist, the historian, the artist, the ethnologist, the antiquarian, the poet; nor upon the boundless field of research it opens up to physical and moral science. I cannot pause to describe to you its scenery, the most imposing

and magnificent in the world, nor to speak about its noble rivers, and its large and populous cities, centres of commercial activity at a time when all Western Europe was without the pale of civilization. I cannot dwell upon its historical records and its mythic fables of prehistoric times, more rich in the poetry of romance and chivalry than the myths and annals of any other land. I cannot stay to trace throughout modern history the effect upon Europe of the Indian trade, nor show as I could, if time allowed me, how each European nation in turn that has enjoyed a monopoly of the Indian trade, in proportion to the extent to which it has enjoyed that monopoly, has risen to the first place among European powers. I must take for granted that you are already cognizant of these things. What I want to impress upon you is, that more or less throughout the length and breadth of the continent of India, among two hundred millions of people there is at present going on a movement—not exactly of a moral kind, nor can I call it exclusively intellectual, nor is it purely social, nor merely political, but combining in different proportions, in different localities and many various classes of society, all these characteristics. It is a movement of thought, the result of which cannot possibly be foreseen, and the importance of which cannot possibly be overrated. No one can venture to foretel how or where it will end, or what shape it will assume. It is as if a nation representing one-sixth of the human race, although of course I do not mean that all sections of it are equally affected, had been in a state of coma for centuries and was now awakening to life, to energy, to thought!

Movements of this kind have been witnessed many times before in the history of mankind, rarely, at any rate in our own age, under more peculiar and striking circumstances. They assume various phases though springing from the same source—at one time political, at another social, at another religious. The motive principle in 1857 exhibited itself in political ferment; since then it has taken another shape, and we now find it most active in the circle of social reform and religious speculation.

There can be no study more profitable or more interesting to the political economist, or the philosopher, than the aspect afforded by the present condition of the Indian mind. I think

we may form some idea of it if we imagine the case of an adult birth, a man brought into the world with his faculties matured, capable of reasoning, but wholly without the guide which experience and education furnish to one who has passed through the ordinary stages from youth to manhood. What would be the questions which a man placed under these circumstances would ask himself, and in what order would they present themselves to his mind? He would examine first the external physical conditions by which he found himself surrounded, his needs and the method of supplying them; he would next ask himself whence he came, and what was his destiny, and he would then investigate his relations to society, and this would lead him to the discovery of his political rights, and he would proceed to claim them.

This, then, is the proposition I wish to put before the people of this country. You have instead of the moral force represented by the activity of one mind engaged in such speculations the force of the collective thought of two hundred millions directed to the examination of this problem of life, and you have the inevitable certainty before you, that before long, no one can tell how soon, the moral force which is now spending itself in the consideration of social problems will address itself to the solution of the question, what are our political rights and where are they?

Before that question comes to be asked, and answered, I want to see the English public aroused to take an intelligent interest in what is passing in India, and to exert itself, and so far as may be possible to control the mighty agency that is at work for good or for evil over that vast continent, to lead into a healthy channel the spirit of inquiry that is now awakening, to supply with wholesome and invigorating diet the young giant that is crying out for food, to assist as far as possible the movement towards enlightenment and progress generally, which is taking place over the whole continent.

It would be almost impossible for me to enumerate all the sources whence the movement has sprung. Doubtless, the great source is the influence of Western civilization and contact with European thought. But, I think, it would be a mistake to

ascribe it wholly to this cause. The movement is, I think, in a great measure indigenous and spontaneous, and the modern school of thought, both among the Hindus and Mahommedans, exhibits exactly the character we should have expected. With one phase of the modern school of thought among the Hindus you are probably familiar, by name, at any rate—I allude to Brahmoism. It was impossible that educated men could retain their faith in a system of religious philosophy like that inculcated in the modern Hindu religious writings, which must be carefully distinguished from the purer system of the much more ancient Veds. No intelligent youth, with a knowledge of the mere elementary principles of natural philosophy, could continue to believe that the earth rests on the horn of a bull, or that an eclipse is caused by a dragon swallowing the sun or moon and then emitting it again. And the result is exactly what we should have anticipated. Driven from their old land marks, and not prepared to embrace Christianity, they have placed themselves under the guidance of the unassisted reasoning powers of the mind, and drifted into the region of a deistic philosophy. There are some who profess to see in this a form of Christianity; just as we were told, if you recollect, that the Taepings in China, who originated the great rebellion, were Christians. But this is a great mistake; the Brahmos are no more Christians than the Platonists were, or any sect of heathen philosophers either before or after the time of our Lord. There is, in fact, nothing of Christianity at all about their system. There may be a coincidence between the two, in that the Brahmoists inculcate obligations as regards the duties of life and a code of morality analogous to that of Christianity. But there the resemblance ceases.

As moral and social reformers, the Brahmos and other modern thinkers have already worked a revolution. I say, have already worked, for, although the progress as yet made is infinitesimal when compared with the immense field it has to traverse before the much desired reform in the social life of the Hindus is complete, yet we all know well with what rapid strides, that mighty force, the Movement of Thought proceeds, when it has to work its way among the crumbling remains of antiquated and

effete systems. At present it is too early to attempt to prognosticate with any degree of certainty the course of this great intellectual revolution. Of one thing, I think, we may be sure, the old fetters of idolatry and superstition once cast aside will never be resumed; and the iron framework of caste, which, however well it may have been adapted to the conditions of social life in former times, is now out of date, when once broken up will never be reconstructed.

Among the Mahommedans this motive power is tending in a different direction. With them it is rather an awakening of religious zeal, a sort of revival. The efforts of their reformers, as well as those of the Hindus, are directed to the spread of education in modern European science, if I may use the term (although properly speaking science is cosmopolitan, and ought not to be regarded as belonging to one race or country more than another). But among the Mahommedans this zeal for progress is accompanied by a corresponding effort to preserve intact and with the most jealous care the citadel of their religious system. The subject of the native press would require a lecture to itself. I cannot here do more than just allude in passing to a periodical recently started by a Mahommedan gentleman in Upper India. He has recently been paying a visit to this country, and has lately returned to India with his energies awakened and his great natural intellectual activity quickened by a residence of some years in London, and intercourse with many literary and scientific men of eminence in the metropolis. In a recent number of this periodical, some copies of which I have here, there is an article from this gentleman's pen upon a subject which, not long ago, was somewhat warmly debated among ourselves. The subject is the part which religious instruction ought to have in education. Syed Ahmed stoutly maintains that there can be no such thing as education without religious instruction, and he calls earnestly, and, I believe, his call will be energetically responded to by his fellow countrymen and co-religionists, to aid him in establishing schools, and especially a university, where the best education in the literature and science of the West as well as the East shall be imparted in conjunction with sound religious instruction in the orthodox Mahommedan faith.

I imagine I shall not be wrong in concluding that you have a general idea of what has been going on in the way of social progress in the three large Presidency towns, as they are called —a ridiculous name, and one which it is to be hoped will be soon replaced by some appellation more correctly expressing the relative condition of Calcutta, Bombay, and Madras to the rest of India. India is generally believed by those whose reading on the subject is confined to the letters of the *Times'* correspondent, which represents, I suppose, the great majority, to be comprised within the limits of these three cities. At any rate it is imagined that these cities are the centres of commercial, political, and intellectual activity, and that the rest of the continent, like the pulses in the human body, beat in harmony with these three hearts, as they are conceived to be. This is the grand mistake Englishmen make, and it is a mistake which, fourteen years ago, caused the expenditure of millions of money and countless lives, and, what is perhaps the worst of the results of civil war, it gave rise to bitter and angry feelings, which, for a while, bade fair to develope into a blood feud.

The absurdity of regarding these seaport towns as standing in the relation of capital cities, will be apparent if we compare their population relatively with that of the whole country, with the population of London, for instance, or Paris, and the proportion it bears to the rest of England or France. In England the population of London represents about one-ninth of that of the United Kingdom. In France the population of Paris represents about one-fifteenth. The population of Calcutta, Bombay, and Madras put together represents about the one hundred and twentieth part of the rest of India.

You will therefore be much misled if, in endeavouring to obtain an idea of what is passing in India, you confine yourself to the records of events in those three great cities, whose importance, in a commercial point of view, has caused to be very much exaggerated in the minds of Englishmen, their importance as centres of political, social, and religious life.

It is my object in this lecture to confine myself to personal impressions and the results of my own experience. I might, of course, collect much valuable and interesting information from

books and parliamentary and official records. But these are sources of information open to all, and I might be needlessly occupying your time by giving you at second-hand materials which you can procure for yourselves direct from the same sources. There is, moreover, a certain air of reality and freshness about personal impressions which does not accompany quotations from written authors.

My experience is confined to Upper India. Of the southern parts of the continent I know nothing practically beyond what may be gathered from a single visit to Madras. But with the country north of Calcutta and Bombay, up as far as Peshawur, the furthermost limit of British dominion, I am as familiar as a man can be with a country where he has resided twenty-four years, and over which he has repeatedly travelled. When I first went to India I found a curious condition of affairs, which still to this day remains unaltered. It is beyond a doubt, one of the strangest features of our position in the country, that there should have been an utter absence of anything approaching to social intercourse between the English and the native races. Englishmen meet natives in official life, and for business purposes, and there their acquaintance ceases. They have never as a class the least penetrated the barrier of reserve behind which the native shelters himself from the social and really friendly intercourse with the Englishman. There are several causes to account for this. I cannot stay to investigate them now. But it has always been my endeavour to break through this barrier, and get below the surface. And those few Englishmen who have attempted to do the same, have, I think, found their reward in a large and interesting field, none the less so for being almost unexplored, in the study of human nature, and the problems of human life. I merely mention these things to shew you the grounds upon which I rest my claim to be heard, when I speak of that hitherto sealed book to Englishmen, the sentiments and feelings of the Indian people.

Now, having regard to the fact that there is a movement such as I have described in progress in India towards social improvement,—a movement partly spontaneous and partly communicated by contact with western ideas and civilization,—it

seems as if there was an obligation upon the people of this country to foster, and, as far as may be, to direct it. At any rate there can be no doubt whatever that there is at present an opportunity of doing an incalculable amount of good in this direction. And when I have said this I need add nothing to impress upon you the obligation, because I know that in the existence of the opportunity of doing good the obligation will be recognized. I should have liked to have dwelt a little upon some of the principal sources whence the motive impulse, so far as it is not indigenous and spontaneous, proceeds. Time will not allow of my doing more than incidentally alluding to these sources, in connection with a few remarks I have to offer, shewing the line in which our efforts in aid of social progress should be directed. That aid, if supplied at all, must be supplied by some agency apart from and beyond mere Government agency. And I know of no other machinery by which that extra governmental influence can be imparted than that of a well-supported active association in aid of social progress in India.

This great work differs from most of the schemes that come before the public, in that it does not, at any rate, at first, call for any vast outlay of money. A certain amount of course is requisite; but its mainspring must be that which no money can purchase,—enthusiasm, energy, and judgment.

The first thing to be done is to provide some machinery by which the great ignorance that prevails with regard to India, and the prejudice that always accompanies ignorance, may be removed. With this view it is proposed that lectures once a month, or as often as may be possible, shall be given under the auspices of the Association, to be followed occasionally perhaps by discussion.

I apprehend that the Committee would have no difficulty in finding competent men to lecture. There must always be in London a number of gentlemen, having great practical acquaintance with India, able and willing to give their countrymen the benefit of their experience. And since the practice has been inaugurated of Indian born gentlemen coming to reside in England to complete their education, you will have the opportunity of acquiring information upon India from the best possible

sources. The Journal of the Society, at present published at Bristol, which is well capable of being enlarged, will afford an excellent medium for disseminating information on Indian social science and progress.

The second suggestion for the Society's operations, the furtherance of female education in India, affords the widest possible scope for philanthropic efforts. To enter fully into the subject would occupy several hours, and I scarcely like to touch upon it without explaining myself fully lest I should be misunderstood. All English efforts after social progress in India should be distinctly confined to *aiding* as opposed to *initiating* any movement. The moment this line of demarcation is overstepped all sorts of confusion, misunderstanding, and ill feeling will be generated. The sentiments of the people with regard to having their women educated differ in different parts of the country; and, as in other departments of social life, so in this, there is a great change just now in progress. It is certain, however, that although in some parts the old deeply-rooted aversion to reform still exists, yet, in others, and particularly in the great centres of population, the wish is very prevalent among the better classes of Hindus to have their wives and daughters instructed in the literature and science of the West, as well as in some of those accomplishments which add so much to the charms and influence of the gentler sex in European society. Among the Mahommedans generally, at any rate in Upper India, it is not so. There is among them a dislike and aversion to the introduction of any such system of intellectual culture. The fact is, I believe, that the ladies in the Mahommedan zenanas, at any rate in Upper India, are already educated in the Mahommedan sense of the term, that is, they are taught Persian, and perhaps Arabic. They are proficient in music and singing and needlework. It is enough, however, for us to know that they are not desirous of admitting English trained female teachers, or any female teachers trained under our system, into their houses. And this being so, I think it is a great mistake to endeavour even to persuade them to introduce a reform of which they do not feel the want. Where the attempt has been made it has resulted in little but ill disguised jealousy and bad feeling, and I should be glad to hear

that the effort had everywhere been abandoned. There is no want of a field for English philanthropy among the Hindu community, and by the time a good English education (by which I do not mean necessarily an education in the English language) has been put within reach of a hundred millions of Hindu families, the Mahommedans may have got over their prejudices. At present the total number of girls attending female schools in all India is 50,000. Of the number of ladies receiving education in zenanas we have no accurate information. These efforts are at present desultory and uncertain. The wives of missionaries and other ladies, as opportunity offers here and there over the whole country, are devoting themselves to the work with ever varying success. As regards the education given to girls in schools, from all I hear, I fear it is not worth much. It would be one of the great benefits which the Association would be able to effect to obtain by means of occasional visits of inspection by duly qualified agents trustworthy information as to what has really been done.

But the existing machinery, even if it were sufficiently extended, is not of a kind adapted to meet the necessities of the case. People of good family will not send their daughters away from their homes to attend schools. What is required is the development of the zenana system, as it is called, which has been tried to some little extent in Madras, Calcutta, and Bombay, and has been found, so far as the experiment has gone, very successful. The system consists in teachers visiting the zenanas. The best class of teachers would be, of course, trained English women. They would be gladly welcomed by the Hindu families. Machinery of this kind, however, could only be obtained by the expenditure of a considerable sum of money. The next best class of instruments would be properly trained native women teachers; and these are much more easily procurable. Government has recently established training schools, on a small scale, as an experimental measure for female zenana teachers, but it should be one of the objects of the Association to develope this system on a much more extended scale, and it is an object clearly within the province of private effort as distinguished from Governmental agency.

But even if the machinery for training either native or English teachers was in full working order, some time must elapse before any practical steps could be adopted. What is to be done meantime? Are we to leave the ground altogether overrun with weeds and thistles, and make no effort to prepare the soil with inferior instruments because the well-finished tools are not ready to hand. Not at all. Hindus of the highest caste have no objection to Brahmans entering their zenanas. On the contrary, they are pleased to see them. Now, if every village in a district and every quarter of a town was provided with one or more Brahman teachers, who might be procured for a salary of from £12 to £15 a year, these men might visit the zenanas in the districts allotted to them and instruct the women. The thirst for knowledge is one that increases with the supply. And were some such organization set on foot by the Association under trustworthy supervision, by the time there were trained female teachers ready to enter the field, the ground would be in a measure prepared for them. I am clearly of opinion, however, that we are in want of accurate information on this important subject. And I do not know a more useful work than a really trustworthy report compiled from personal examination and inspection, shewing what has actually been done, what is being done, and the limits within which further exertions should be made. Those limits are wide enough now to render the field of labour practically inexhaustible, because there is no doubt that among large masses of the population the desire for the spread of female education is very strong, and it must be years before the whole of the ground now open is taken up by the operations of any society. But there is no branch of social reform in which that rare faculty, judgment, is more required, and without accurate information there would be danger of resources being wasted by the attempt to initiate a movement in places where there is no indication of its spontaneous birth.

Then, again, I think there is often a danger of our overlooking the essential differences between habits of life that are the result of circumstances, and those which have their root deeply laid in the instincts of human nature. The former it may be our duty to endeavour to modify and improve; with the latter it is not only useless but dangerous to interfere.

And I would impress upon all who are engaged in educational efforts in the east, and I am persuaded it cannot be too constantly borne in mind, that to instruct it is not necessary to Anglicize.

A very erroneous notion prevails in England and the West generally with regard to the position and influence of Eastern women. Among the poorer classes, as in our own country, a vast deal of household drudgery does fall to woman's lot. But in spite of their seclusion may we not say, perhaps, in consequence of it the female sex among the upper classes of Hindus and Mahommedans exert as much influence in family affairs as among ourselves. In India, whatever may be the condition in other Eastern countries, wives and mothers are certainly not the nonentities they are generally represented to be by Western writers. As wives and mothers they are treated with just as much respect and consideration as is accorded to the sex among the upper classes certainly of Englishmen; and the very seclusion of the zenana, so suggestive of intolerable monotony to an Englishwoman, is connected with no such disagreeable association in the East. The bird that is born in a cage is quite content to live and die there, the more so if it has been the habit of its kind for countless generations. But in the family circle and the daily round of domestic duties, interests, and enjoyments, the Hindu woman has a field for her sympathies and her affections, which puts her quite on a par with her sisters of the West.

Female education, however, is very far from being the only department of social progress to which the efforts of the Association might be directed. There is an allusion in the prospectus to another method in which English benevolence and philanthropy might find an almost limitless field—the encouragement of schools of art and industry. The time is rapidly approaching, I hope, when the old-fashioned notion so long current among ourselves, that to train a child to be a useful member of society it is necessary to break its young heart and sow the seeds of inveterate dislike to all teaching, by cramming it with all sorts of useless matter—putting the mind in a vice, as it were, and screwing into it grammar and geography presented in the driest possible form. I do not mean to depreciate the value of reading, writing and arithmetic. But I believe it is a mistake to apply

any fixed and stereotyped principles to an object so subtle and so variable as the human mind. Our educational system has often reminded me of the manufacture of marbles. You take a number of pieces of stone, regardless of their distinctive features, composition, shape, or material; all you look at is to see that they are about the same size; you put them all in a bag together, and shake them up till by friction, knocking, and pounding you have got them all round, when you roll them out on the counter quite pleased with your success. The fact that among the stones subjected to this very unscientific process, there were delicate crystals capable of being shaped into the most beautiful forms, or of serving some especial purpose in art or science, has altogether escaped notice. Some of them were perhaps composed of tender and friable matter, and these have been altogether crushed in the process, being unfitted for sudden and harsh contact with angular fragments of granite and limestone. No matter, your educationalist has turned out seventy-five per cent. of round marbles ready for the counter, and the other twenty-five per cent. he considers refuse fit to be thrown away. Industrial schools where mechanical arts can be taught and information given by means of object-lessons would be invaluable in India, and can obviously only be introduced by extra governmental agency, such as this Association could supply.

Again, in the matter of jail discipline and reformatories, there is the widest possible field for philanthropic effort in India; and this will be readily understood by those who have penetrated behind the scenes and witnessed the actual working of the administrative judicial machinery.

There may possibly be here and there an exception, but, I believe, I am right in saying that, as a rule, the reformatory system, which has been attended with such enormous benefits in Great Britain, has not been attempted in India. But if in the interests of humanity there is a moral obligation in this country to make a distinction between classes of criminals, and to prevent the contamination of the comparatively innocent by intercourse with hardened and vicious characters, that obligation applies with ten-fold force to India. I find considerable difficulty in explaining the actual condition of things there to an audience

composed of persons who are familiar only with the system under which the law is administered in our favoured country. I will put a hypothetical case to you. Imagine if you can what the state of affairs would be in England if, for instance, our judges and magistrates were all Germans or Russians, with as much knowledge of the English language as an Englishman deems it necessary to acquire of French to carry him comfortably across the continent—a colloquial knowledge sufficient to enable him to keep up a conversation about the ordinary occurrences and necessities of everyday life. Imagine further, that these magistrates and judges, though able to converse in English to the extent I have specified, were yet literally unable to read a word of a document written in English, or to write a word. Do away with the assistance of juries and with all cross-examination of witnesses (for I defy you to cross-examine a witness to any useful purpose when the questions and answers are all written down), introduce finally a police very corrupt, raised from the lowest classes, with all the love and talent for intrigue so strongly developed in Oriental character, and organized on a system under which credit, promotion, and reward follow the conviction of accused persons—add to all this a laxity of supervision, by which accused persons may be illegally detained in confinement and subjected to physical violence, deprivation of food and rest, almost at the will of their captors, and you may get some idea of what the administration of criminal justice in India is like. It is, in fact, a hap-hazard sort of affair, in which the guilty and the innocent take their chance. How necessary is it then that there should be careful discrimination in jails between the really corrupt and comparatively, perhaps completely, innocent persons who are too often sent there to learn, it may be, for the first time, the lesson of vice. And this is the more necessary because the criminal law in India is made use of to an extent that can scarcely be believed in England, as an instrument of private malice.

I look, therefore, upon jail discipline in India as a sphere of philanthropic effort, where untold benefit might be conferred upon a very large class of unfortunate and suffering people. And, I believe, that by the introduction of the reformatory

system and other measures, having for their object the discrimination between and separation of different classes of offenders, or persons under sentence, numbers might be protected from the contaminating influence of hardened and vicious characters.

But a very little reflection will convince you that the methods in which the condition of the people of India can be improved are not to be readily enumerated. I can assure you that if you can only once get underneath the surface of the social and domestic life of the Hindus you will find ample room for the exercise of the largest-hearted benevolence. I cannot stay to enter into further details here. Should the Association meet with that support which we hope it will receive, I may, perhaps, have other opportunities of going further into this subject; at present it is the less necessary to do so, because the framers of the prospectus, having in view the boundless extent of the field for improvement before this Society, have wisely confined themselves to mentioning one or two out of the hundred methods in which the intellectual and educated classes of Great Britain can and ought to assist their Indian fellow subjects.

Among the many changes of thought and opinion which have lately taken place in India, must be reckoned the abandonment of the restrictions formerly placed by caste prejudices upon natives of India visiting Europe. This affects both Hindus and Mahommedans. Formerly no Hindu could cross the sea without subjecting himself to all the social annoyances that accompany in these days the adoption of Christianity by a Hindu, and the total abnegation of the religion of his forefathers. Now, numbers of Hindus come over from India, and, although upon their return to their native land they are probably regarded with dislike by the old orthodox conservative school, yet there is sufficient evidence in the fact that we constantly meet Brahman gentlemen in the streets of London, that old prejudices are wearing away. I believe there is an authenticated declaration of the opinions of certain learned Pundits extant, to the effect that there is nothing in the Hindu religious code prohibitory of a journey across the sea. I speak thus doubtfully because I have never myself seen the declaration; but it is a matter of common notoriety that a document to this effect has emanated from authoritative sources.

As regards the Mahommedan inhabitants of India, there never was any real objection to their visiting Europe, and Turks have always been in the habit of visiting and residing in the cities of Western Europe; and it was never hinted that their status suffered from such residence, nor was their orthodoxy ever called in question on account of it. The Mahommedans of India, however, as they themselves admit, have by a long intercourse with Hindus, become more or less tainted with Hinduism: they have gradually imbibed some of their prejudices, and even adopted some of their customs.

Among the prejudices thus picked up from the Hindus may be reckoned their aversion to crossing the sea, and a vague notion that the prayers and religious ceremonies obligatory upon orthodox Mahommedans could not be properly observed in Europe. And there was also a vague apprehension that the articles of food procurable in Christian countries were not such as might be consumed by strict Mahommedans—clearly a prejudice of Hindu rather than Mahommedan origin. Many, if not all these prejudices are rapidly disappearing, for mere prejudices they are, even regarded from a Mahommedan point of view, and the immense value of a thorough English education, as distinguished from an Anglo-Indian education, having of late years become more apparent, numbers of Indian gentlemen, both Hindu and Mahommedan, now come to this country to prosecute their studies, some to compete for the Indian Civil Service, some to be called to the bar, others to study medicine, and others for the purpose of receiving a liberal education at our Universities. I was glad to see a paragraph the other day in a native vernacular newspaper published in Upper India, describing how the Mahommedan prayers recited at one of their sacred seasons called the "Eed ul fitr" had been duly performed according to the rites of the Koran in London. Attention was prominently drawn to the fact, and the orthodox Moslems of India were called upon to take notice that there could henceforward be no possible objection to their proceeding to London and taking up their residence there for educational and other purposes, on the ground that their religious observances need be neglected. There is no doubt that in time the number of both Hindus and Mahommedans that come over will increase; and I

can imagine no better means of effecting those social reforms, which all who know India are so anxious to see introduced, than by encouraging the rising generation of India to seek our shores. You may depend upon it there is no single method by which so much good may be done to India as this. If we are to regenerate that country, as the cant phrase is,—that is, if we are really to educate its people, to teach them to think, to impart something of that tone of manly independence, upon the possession of which we pride ourselves, and which is at the bottom of our own success in commerce, literature, and in art, we shall only do it through the people themselves. It is the same with Christianity; it is hopeless to expect any real progress to be made in spreading Christianity in India till it can be attempted by means of a native pastorate. Our great missionary societies are now fully alive to this, and they are wisely and prudently directing their efforts to establishing native independent churches wherever it is found practicable, as free as possible from the control of European supervision. And so, if you would have your attempts at social reform anything but a spasmodic series of *dilettante* efforts, they must be made through and by native reformers and native leaders of thought. So soon then as you shall succeed in bringing about free intercourse between India and England, so soon as you shall succeed in making it a regular thing for young Indian gentlemen to come to Great Britain and complete their education at our Universities, and return to their native land with ideas enlarged, energies awakened, and the intellectual powers aroused by contact with Western civilization and English activity of thought, you will have done something towards giving India a return for the £12,000,000 you drain annually from her resources to add to your own.

But to induce Indian gentlemen to leave their families and their country, and to take up their abode for some years in a land where everything is so strange and foreign to them as England, some encouragement should be held out. And it will be one of the objects of this Association to give that encouragement. This may be done in many ways, and by means requiring no great strain upon our resources, and no extraordinary effort. It may be done by individuals without moving out of their ordinary

routine of social duties. In fact, all that will be necessary will be to give to those Indian gentlemen who come to London with introductions, the opportunity of mixing in good English society, and so affording them the means of becoming better acquainted than they otherwise would be with the domestic life of English people.

Such intercourse will be perhaps the greatest safeguard they would have against the dangerous temptations which this metropolis holds out to a young foreigner with much of his time, especially in the evening, necessarily at his own disposal. It may be said that this is a matter within the province of individual action, and that associated effort is unnecessary to effect it. But the truth is, as you well know, that little duties of this kind are sure to be overlooked unless attention is prominently drawn to them; and the mere occasional meeting together of the members of the Association, and the interchange of ideas, in conversation, will have the effect of keeping in the mind these little duties, which would otherwise be inevitably forgotten.

I cannot pass over this subject, however, without alluding to a matter which, I hope, may one day come within the scope of the Society's operations, although that scope must be considerably widened before my wishes can be realized. So fully impressed am I with the enormous advantage that must accrue from more free and friendly intercourse between the educated classes of India and Great Britain, and especially from the practice of Indian gentlemen coming to this country to complete their education, that I would urge upon you not to lose sight of this powerful engine for the social improvement of India. It is the most effective machinery you can possibly use. Its advantage is twofold. It not only brings the Indian mind into contact with English thought in a way no other method can effect, but it enables Englishmen to learn and understand what in India, strange to say, they never can learn, what the character of the modern Indian mind really is. I have numbers of friends among the native gentlemen in India, but I may safely say I never knew what it was to be, in any sense of the word, *intimate*, so as to understand their character, till I came to know them upon English soil. It may appear absurd and paradoxical, but I have

no doubt the experience of others would tally with my own. The advantage of this intercourse to those young men who are about to go to India in an official career, is too apparent to need enlarging upon. Now, if there was a university or large college in London, where young men from India could enjoy the benefit of an academical career within the healthy influence of English thought and independence, where they could mix with English university men preparing for an Indian career, this twofold advantage would be gained. Indian parents would feel that they could more safely trust their sons to come to this country, and it is impossible but that Englishmen, who are preparing for official life in the East, would learn a great deal of Oriental character, habits of thought, and views which they never can acquire in the country itself, however long their sojourn in it may be. It may fairly come within the scope of this Society hereafter to assist at any rate in getting some such institution founded. I am certain there could be no means devised so well calculated to advance the social progress of India. Our existing universities, of course, offer the best opportunities for education, but they do not, and they never will, produce that particular effect which the institution I am alluding to would have, of affording an inducement to Indian parents to send their sons to England. If it were known in India that there was an institution in London such as I have hinted at, I believe hundreds would gladly avail themselves of it. Once started and organized it would be easily made self supporting.

Before concluding, I must say a word in anticipation of an objection which I am pretty sure will be urged in some quarters against this Association. It will be said that all efforts at social progress in India should be left to the Christian missionary. Unquestionably the Christian missionary is among the most efficient of social reformers; but valuable as are his efforts you all know how they are circumscribed by the activity and zeal of hostile religious systems. Social reformation unquestionably accompanies the reception of Christianity *as a rule*. I say "as a rule," for it is not very easy to discriminate between the influence of Christianity on social life apart from purely moral questions, and that of the education that almost always

accompanies Christianity. And the social condition of, for instance, the Abyssinians and other Eastern churches that have been long removed from the influence of Western civilization, suggests the idea that the social advancement so commonly observable among communities converted by missionary teaching, may be due perhaps rather to the example and teaching of the missionary and his wife as social reformers than as purely religious instructors. We have no reason to suppose that the thousands whom the great Apostle of the Indies, S. Xavier, admitted to baptism, were the least refined or elevated socially above the level of their surrounding heathen neighbours. But there is ample room, and more than ample room for the exertions of those who, for one reason or another, do not feel themselves called upon to coöperate with missionary efforts. We, none of us, I trust, doubt that that education which trains an immortal soul for a higher destiny in a future life is as far superior to that which is intended to make him merely a good citizen and a useful member of society, as heaven is removed from earth. But this is not the issue. It clearly and plainly cannot be our duty as Christians and as Englishmen to withhold from our Indian fellow-subjects the advantages of civilization until the process of religious conversion is complete. But in reality all who know India, know, that it is not so much an aversion to examine the truths of Christianity that keeps the natives of India from nominally coming over to our faith, as the social persecution they undergo if they become Christians. No Englishman can have any idea of the extent of actual persecution, often accompanied with physical pains and penalties, to which a native convert is exposed. Well now, I think, all will admit, both those who recognise proselytism as a Christian duty, and those who do not, that one of the very first elements of progress is freedom of thought and opinion. Every intelligent human being arrived at years of discretion should be allowed the free and unfettered enjoyment of his own religious opinions. We Englishmen, of all others, ought to sympathize with those who are labouring under the galling yoke of intellectual and religious tyranny. Now it is not only a result which we should expect *a priori* to follow from the movement which is best described,

though not fully expressed, in the term "social progress," but it is a result which actual experience shews does follow from it, viz., freedom from the yoke of that terrible tyrant superstition. Therefore, I say, the objects of this Association appeal to the sympathies of both classes, both of those who, from a Christian point of view, desire to see the Indian mind delivered from bondage and allowed to embrace a new faith, and to those who limit their desire to effect the improvement of their fellow-men to their mere social condition and their temporal happiness.

There is another objection to the constitution and organization of this Society, to which I must briefly allude. Coöperation with the natives of India in their own efforts after improvement is the fundamental principle upon which this Association purposes to act. Now that necessarily involves coöperation with and friendly intercourse between people of very different religious opinions. It is a strange phenomenon, but one with which we nevertheless become more or less familiar when we visit foreign countries, that the animosity and antagonism between different sects of Christians and between different Christian churches or denominations, is very often indeed greater than the antagonism between Christians and those who do not call themselves Christians at all. Were it not that this fact is within our experience, it might seem altogether incredible that people should see no objection to associating themselves for secular objects with Hindus, Mahommedans, and Buddhists, and yet should find an insuperable objection to associating themselves for the purposes of this Society, which are purely secular, with those who adopt a different form of Christianity from themselves. Yet such is the case, and this is the reason I know which has been given by a great many persons for not joining the Association. All I can say is we are well content to be without the coöperation of such persons. The fundamental principle of our Association is stated in the prospectus in as plain words as any proposition can be expressed, "for all purposes coming within the scope of the Society's operations the common ground of absolute neutrality in regard to religion is the only position that can be occupied."

I must apologise to you for touching on this subject. I have

only done so because this being the inaugural lecture I thought it as well this matter should be cleared up once for all. Our objects and purposes are as purely secular as those of the Statistical Society or the Geographical Society.

I must add a word with reference to a suggestion that has been made that this Association should join itself to some one or other of the numerous societies now in existence. The multiplying of different centres of associated operation is no doubt an evil; it is calculated to distract attention and to fritter away resources in a diversity of efforts; and where two bodies have the same objects in view and occupy the same field, it is much better they should amalgamate. But this is not the case here. There is no association now extant which occupies the same field as this. The one to which it is most nearly allied is the "Social Science," but the resemblance is merely superficial and nominal. Our field is a special one, India, and it is large enough I am sure. Our objects are purely practical—not the study and development of social science so much as the application of the accepted principles of social science and modern progress to Indian society.

I must apologize for having taken up so much of your time, but I was anxious, as this is the inaugural lecture of the Society, to give as clear and complete an exposition of its objects and purposes as I could. Its success, of course, depends upon the support it meets with, and that rests with you. But I believe if well supported, as it ought to be, it will prove the commencement of a great work for India. India is a country which prides itself, and prides itself justly, on the memories of a past civilisation. It has been well said that our policy there has heretofore been almost exclusively *destructive:* it must for the future be *constructive* if we would realize that object which we are all anxious to attain, and which, I believe, this Association will prove the most effective machinery to accomplish, namely, that the future historian of India shall date the regeneration of the country, and its reawakening to a new life and new era of civilisation, from its connection with the British Empire!

ASSOCIATION

IN AID OF

SOCIAL PROGRESS IN INDIA.

LONDON BRANCH.

ESTABLISHED 1871.

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I. THE object of this Asssociation is to assist the movements towards social improvement now taking place in India.

II. Although the social progress of two hundred millions of people is an object of such vast dimensions that it may appear at first sight to be utterly beyond the scope of any association of individuals to aid it, yet it must be remembered that movements of this nature generally commence with isolated efforts, widening by degrees till they embrace in their sphere of action whole communities of people.

III. The Committee are in possession of evidence that such movements have already begun, and that not from one, but from several indigenous centres in different parts of India. These efforts are clearly capable of being materially assisted by the action of an Association like that for which they now venture to solicit public support.

IV. It would, however, be difficult to obtain adequate support in aid of an object of this kind without a more general knowledge than is commonly met with in this country of the social condition of India, and of the attempts that are being made there towards improvement. One of the main objects, therefore, of this Association will be to impart information by means of lectures, conversaziones, correspondence, and intercourse with natives of India, and by the Journal of the Association.*

V. The objects of the Association, therefore, are the following:—

1. To impart information, with the view of awakening general interest in this country in the social condition of the people of India.
2. To assist the movements now in progress in various parts of India towards general social improvement, and especially at present in respect to female education, the encouragement of schools of art and industry, and friendly intercourse between the English and the Indian races.
3. To obtain information from all parts of India where efforts are being made in furtherance of any of these objects, by means of correspondence with leaders of thought and with reformers who are at present labouring, under enormous difficulties, in a field of unlimited extent.
4. To encourage as much as possible natives of India to visit England, and to assist those who do come to this country, by facilitating their introduction to English families, and affording them the means of becoming better acquainted, than they otherwise could be, with the domestic life of English people; so that they may acquire a taste for the habits and pursuits of refined society, and have opportunities of studying to the best advantage English ideas, institutions and customs.

VI. As the main purport of the Association is to effect its objects by coöperation and intercourse between people differing in race and creed, it is obvious that, for all purposes coming within the scope of the Society's operations, the common ground of absolute neutrality, in regard to religion, is the only position that can be occupied.

VII. One branch of the Association already exists at Bristol and another at Edinburgh; and it is hoped that in course of time branches will be established in other large cities.

VIII. The subscription to the Association is Ten Shillings and upwards per annum, which will entitle the subscriber to all the privileges of membership. Associate members subscribing Five Shillings per annum will be entitled to admission to lectures, the Monthly Journal, and other privileges, except the right of voting.

IX. The names of subscribers, donations and subscriptions to be sent to either of the Honorary Secretaries, Miss E. A. Manning, 107 Victoria Street, Westminster, or Rev. T. Hunter, 8 Queen Square, W.C.

* This Journal is at present published monthly at Bristol, and may be had on application to Miss CARPENTER, Red Lodge House, in that City.

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